

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-37. Canceled

38. (Original) Device for converting a stream of living poultry which fluctuates over the course of time into a stream of living poultry which is substantially uniform over the course of time in a slaughter line, the device comprising at least the following stations:

- an unloading station for unloading the poultry from at least one holder,
- a connecting station for connecting the poultry to carriers,
- a conveying station for conveying the poultry as a stream of poultry from the unloading station to the connecting station, the conveying station comprising at least one conveyor device,

characterized in that the device comprises at least one control device which is constructed to control the number of birds which is transferred from the unloading station to the conveying station or from the conveying station to the connecting station per time unit, in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

39. (Original) Device according to claim 38, wherein the poultry, in the unloading station, is unloaded from the at least one holder by at least one unloading device.

40. (Original) Device according to claim 39, wherein the control device is linked to the at least one unloading device in order to control a number of birds which is unloaded from the at least one holder per time unit.

41. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 39, wherein a number of unloading devices are arranged in parallel.

42. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein the at least one conveyor device is constructed to convey the poultry at a conveying speed, the control device being linked to the at least one conveyor device and being constructed to control the conveying speed of the at least one conveyor device in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

43. (Original) Device according to claim 42, wherein the conveying station comprises a number of conveyor devices arranged in parallel.

44. (Original) Device according to claim 43, wherein a number of conveyor devices convey the poultry from the unloading station to a collection-conveyor device, and wherein the collection and conveyor device conveys the poultry to the connecting station at a speed.

45. (Original) Device according to claim 44, wherein the control device is constructed to control the number of birds which is transferred from the at least one conveyor device to the collection-conveyor device per time unit, in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

46. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 42, wherein the conveying station comprises a number of conveyor devices connected in series.

47. (Original) Device according to claim 46, wherein the control device is constructed to control the number of birds which is transferred from a conveyor device to a subsequent conveyor device per time unit, in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

48. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein at least one first buffer storage member for the temporary storage of poultry is arranged downstream of the unloading station and upstream of the connecting station.

49. (Original) Device according to claim 48, wherein the control device is linked to the at least one buffer storage member in order to control a number of birds which is released from the at least one first buffer storage member per time unit.

50. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein a stunning station is arranged upstream of the connecting station.

51. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein a second buffer storage member, for temporarily storing birds which have been delivered to the connecting station and for which no carrier is available, is positioned in the connecting station.

52. (Currently Amended) Device according to ~~claim 34~~ claim 38, wherein the unloading station comprises at least one sensor which measures at least one parameter relating to the unloading, which parameter is preferably selected from a group of parameters which comprises:

- a number of birds which is unloaded from the holder per time unit,
- a weight of a total number of birds in the holder,
- a weight of at least one individual bird in the holder,
- a number of birds present in the holder, and
- a temperature of a bird,

resulting in at least one measured value, the at least one measured value being fed to the control device in order to control the number of birds which is transferred from the unloading station to the conveying station or from the conveying station to the connecting station per time unit, in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

53. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein the conveying station comprises at least one sensor which is constructed to measure at least one parameter relating to the conveying, which parameter is preferably selected from a group of parameters which comprises:

- a number of birds which passes a defined point on the conveyor device per time unit,
- a weight of the total number of birds on the at least one conveyor device,

- a weight of at least one individual bird on the at least one conveyor device,
- a duration of time between a bird leaving the unloading station and arriving at the connecting station,
- a conveying speed of a stream of poultry, and
- a number of birds which is present on the conveying member,

resulting in at least one measured value, the at least one measured value being fed to the control device in order to control the number of birds which is transferred from the unloading station to the conveying station or from the conveying station to the connecting station per time unit, in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

54. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein the connecting station comprises at least one sensor which is constructed to measure at least one parameter relating to the connecting of the birds to the carrier, which at least one parameter is preferably selected from a group of parameters which comprises:

- a waiting time for a bird at the connecting station,
- a number of birds waiting at the connecting station,
- a number of birds which is delivered to the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of carriers which leaves the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of carriers which leaves the connecting station per time unit without a bird having been connected to them,
- a number of birds which is delivered to the connecting station per time unit without a carrier being available for them,

- a number of birds present at the connecting station for connection to a carrier, and
- a number of carriers which is approaching the connecting station per time unit,

resulting in at least one measured value, the at least one measured value being fed to the control device in order to control the number of birds which is transferred from the unloading station to the conveying station or from the conveying station to the connecting station per time unit, in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

55. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 52, wherein the said at least one sensor is linked to the control device, and wherein the control device is linked to the at least one conveyor device, and wherein the said measured values are fed to the control device in order to control the at least one conveyor device.

56. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 52, wherein the said at least one sensor is linked to the control device, and wherein the control device is linked to the at least one unloading device, and wherein the said measured values are fed to the control device in order to control the at least one unloading device.

57. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 52, wherein the said at least one sensor is linked to the control device, and wherein the control device is linked to the at least one first buffer storage member, and wherein the said measured values are fed to the control device in order to control the at least one first buffer storage member.

58. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein the at least one conveyor device is a conveyor belt.

59. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 39, wherein the unloading station comprises a tilting device for tilting the at least one holder, wherein the poultry leaves the holder under the influence of the force of gravity.

60. (Original) Device according to claim 59, wherein the control device is constructed to control the tilting of the tilting device.

61. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 39, wherein the at least one unloading device comprises an arm which can move into the at least one holder.

62. (Original) Device according to claim 61, wherein the control device is constructed to control the arm of the unloading device.

63. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 52, wherein the said at least one sensor is preferably selected from a group which comprises:

- a pivotable body,
- a measuring instrument for measuring a weight,
- a measuring instrument for measuring infrared radiation, and
- an optical measuring instrument.

64. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 52, wherein the at least one conveyor device extends over a defined distance, and wherein the at least one conveyor device has an upstream side and a downstream side, and wherein the at least one sensor is arranged on the downstream side of the at least one conveyor device.

65. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 61, wherein the arm comprises a first conveyor belt.

66. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 39, wherein the unloading device comprises a second conveyor belt, which can be moved into a position above the poultry which is to be unloaded, and wherein the said second conveyor belt is constructed to unload the poultry from the holder.

67-68. (Canceled)

69. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein the connecting station comprises a number of connecting lines.

70. (Original) Device according to claim 69, wherein a conveyor in part follows two different paths, a first path running along a connecting line while a second path does not run along a connecting line, and wherein the conveyor is constructed to enable carriers to follow the first or second path depending on a predetermined selection.

71. (Previously Presented) Device according to claim 38, wherein the device is configured so as to adjust the number of birds which is transferred to the conveying station by the unloading station or to the connecting station by the conveying station per time unit using minor changes or substantially continuously.

72. (Withdrawn) Method for making a fluctuating stream of living poultry in a slaughter line substantially uniform, the slaughterline comprising an unloading station, a conveying station and a connecting station, wherein the poultry is delivered to the unloading station in at least one holder, wherein the poultry is unloaded from the at least one holder in the unloading station and is transferred to the conveying station, wherein the stream of poultry is formed, and wherein the conveying station comprises at least one conveyor device, wherein the stream of poultry is conveyed in the conveying station and is transferred to the connecting station, where the poultry is connected to carriers, characterized in that the number of birds which is transferred per time unit to the conveying station by the unloading station or to the connecting station by the conveying station is controlled in order to reduce fluctuations in the stream of poultry.

73. (Withdrawn - Currently Amended) Method according to ~~claim 33~~ claim 72, wherein the poultry is stunned before arriving in the connecting station.

74. (Withdrawn) Method according to claim 72, wherein at least one parameter is measured from a group of parameters which comprises:

- a total weight of the number of birds in the holder,

- a weight of at least one individual bird in the holder,
- a number of birds which is present in the holder,
- a number of birds which is unloaded from the holder per time unit,
- a temperature of a bird,
- a total weight of the number of birds on the conveyor device,
- a weight of at least one individual bird on the at least one conveyor device,
- a duration of time between a bird leaving the unloading station and arriving at the connecting station,
- a conveying speed of the at least one conveyor device,
- a waiting time for a bird at the connecting station,
- a number of birds which is transferred to the conveying station by the unloading station per time unit,
- a number of birds which is transferred to the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of birds which is delivered to the connecting station within a defined time without a carrier being available for them,
- a number of carriers which leaves the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of carriers which leaves the connecting station per time unit without a bird being connected to them,
- a number of birds which is present at the connecting station in order to be connected to a carrier,

- a number of carriers which approaches the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of birds which is present on the conveyor device,
- a number of birds which passes a predetermined point in the slaughter line per time unit,

forming at least one measured value, the at least one measured value being used to control the number of birds which is transferred to the conveying station by the unloading station or to the connecting station by the conveying station per time unit.

75. (Withdrawn) Method according to claim 73, wherein at least one parameter is measured from a group of parameters which comprises:

- a total weight of the number of birds in the holder,
- a weight of at least one individual bird in the holder,
- a number of birds which is present in the holder,
- a number of birds which is unloaded from the holder per time unit,
- a temperature of a bird,
- a total weight of the number of birds on the conveyor device,
- a weight of at least one individual bird on the at least one conveyor device,
- a duration of time between a bird leaving the unloading station and arriving at the connecting station,
- a conveying speed of the at least one conveyor device,
- a waiting time for a bird at the connecting station,

- a number of birds which is transferred to the conveying station by the unloading station per time unit,
- a number of birds which is transferred to the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of birds which is delivered to the connecting station within a defined time without a carrier being available for them,
- a number of carriers which leaves the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of carriers which leaves the connecting station per time unit without a bird being connected to them,
- a number of birds which is present at the connecting station in order to be connected to a carrier,
- a number of carriers which approaches the connecting station per time unit,
- a number of birds which is present on the conveyor device,
- a number of birds which passes a predetermined point in the slaughter line per time unit,

forming at least one measured value, the at least one measured value being used to control the number of birds which is transferred to the conveying station by the unloading station or to the connecting station by the conveying station per time unit.

76. (Withdrawn) Method according to claim 74, wherein at least one of the said measured values is used to control the conveying speed of the at least one conveyor device.

77. (Withdrawn) Method according to claim 75, wherein at least one of the said measured values is used to control the conveying speed of the at least one conveyor device.